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Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 197258

EXDIS FOR AMB YOUNG FROM UNA

FOLLOWING REPEAT CAIRO 18323 ACTION SECSTATE INFO JERUSALEM TEL AVID DATED AUG 3:
QTE: S E C R E T CAIRO 18323

EXDIS

JERUSALEM FOR AMBASSADOR ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR EG US
SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN CONCERN OVER WHAT IS SEEN AS U.S. RE-
- TREAT FROM BASIC MIDDLE EAST POSITIONS

SUMMARY. KAMEL'S CHEF DE CABINET, AMB AHMED MAHER, ON AUGUST 3 DESCRIBED TO ARRIVING AND DEPARTING POL COUNSELORS THE MAIN THEMES OF THE PREVIOUS DAY'S THREE-HOUR MEETING BETWEEN KAMEL AND AMBASSADORS ABDEL MEGUID AND GHORBAL IN PREPARATION FOR NEXT WEEK'S TALKS WITH SECRETARY. MAHER MADE IT CLEAR THAT EGYPTIAN POLICY-MAKERS ARE EXTREMELY DISTURBED OVER WHAT APPEARS TO THEM
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A STRINGING OUT OF NEGOTIATIONS FOR THEIR OWN SAKE AND AN UNWILLINGNESS TO STAND BY LONG-HELD POSITIONS ON THE PRINCIPLES OF A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. MAHER BEGAN THE DISCUSSION BY REMARKING THAT THE CAIRO PRESS HAD MADE A GREAT TO-DO OVER YESTERDAY'S MEETING BETWEEN THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND AMBASSADORS GHORBAL

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AND ABDEL MEGUID, BUT THE MEETING WAS OCCASIONED BY THE CHANCE PRESENCE IN CAIRO OF EGYPT'S UN AND U.S. AMBASSADORS AND IN FACT RESULTED IN NO NEW DECISIONS. CURRENT EGYPTIAN THINKING ON THE PEACE PROCESS HAD BEEN LAID OUT FULLY TO ROY ATHERTON BY BOTH PRESIDENT SADAT AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER.

2. THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, MAHER CONTINUED, WAS IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT WITH PRESIDENT SADAT THAT TIME HAD RUN OUT ON THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. LEEDS HAD BEEN THE TURNING POINT. DAYAN'S CONTENTION THAT ARAB LAND WAS A PROPER SUBJECT FOR NEGOTIATIONS MADE IT CLEAR THAT AN HONORABLE SETTLEMENT, IN WHICH PEACE AND NORMAL RELATIONS WOULD BE EXCHANGED FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL ON ALL FRONTS, WAS NOW DEFINITIVELY OUT OF REACH. SADAT HAD A RESPONSIBILITY TO HIS PEOPLE TO LET THEM KNOW THE TRUE FACTS. MAHER ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SADAT'S BREAKING OFF OF DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WOULD PROBABLY BE MISUNDERSTOOD IN THE WEST, BUT HE REPEATED THAT THE PRESIDENT'S CHIEF RESPONSIBILITY WAS TO HIS OWN PEOPLE AND NOT TO HIS IMAGE IN AMERICA.

3. GIVEN THE TOTAL INCOMPATABILITY OF THE EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI POSITIONS, MAHER SAID INFORMED EGYPTIANS FOUNA IT IMPOSSIBLE TO UNDERSTAND THE DOGGED U.S. DETERMINATION TO CONTINUE DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS. "YOU SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO US AFTER LEEDS; WE SAID DIRECT CONTACTS HAD

NO FURTHER UTILITY IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, AND WE MEANT IT." MAHER CONTINUED THAT EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS WHO KNEW THIS HISTORY WERE APPALLED AT THE DEPARTMENT'S PUBLIC EXPRESSION OF DISAPPOINTMENT AT SADAT'S DECISION NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN FURTHER TRIPARTITE DISCUSSIONS.

4. MAHER EMPHASIZED THAT SADAT HAD BY NO MEANS ABANDONED HIS INITIATIVE. THE PRESIDENT WANTED U.S. EFFORTS TO CONTINUE, BUT THE CONTEXT OF ANY FURTHER DIRECT CONTACTS SIMPLY HAD TO BE CLARIFIED. THE TIME HAD COME FOR THE U.S. TO RESTATE CERTAIN BASIC PRINCIPLES THAT IT HAD LONG ESPOUSED: ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL ON ALL FRONTS EXCEPT FOR MINOR TERRITORIAL ADJUSTMENTS, THE ILLEGALITY OF ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, AND THE ASWAN FORMULA WITH RESPECT TO PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION IN THE DETERMINATION OF THEIR FUTURE. HE WAS "PERSONAL-LY" CERTAIN THAT EGYPT WOULD AGREE TO FURTHER DIRECT CONTACTS IF THE FRAMEWORK OF THE NEGOTIATIONS WAS THUS CLARIFIED BY THE U.S. ALMOST AS AN ASIDE, HE REMARKED THAT THIS CLARIFICATION MIGHT BE CONTAINED IN AN INVITA-TION FOR RESUMED DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS.

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5. AT ANOTHER STAGE OF THE CONVERSATION, MAHER SPOKE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF A COMMON U.S./EGYPTIAN POSITION AT THE UN ON ISSUES WHICH THE TWO GOVERNMENTS ARE IN BASIC AGREEMENT, SUCH AS OIL EXPLOITATION IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND ISRAELI SETTLEMENT POLICY. HE REMARKED THAT BOTH EGYPT AND THE U.S. WOULD SEEM TO HAVE AN INTEREST IN FINDING COMMON GROUND AT THE UN IF THE PRESENT COURSE OF NEGOTIATIONS CAME TO AN END. EILTS UNQTE VANCE

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